

# Colossus

*How Shakespeare  
still bestrides the cultural  
and literary world*

Edited by  
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and  
Aeddan Shaw

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## Introduction

The figure of William Shakespeare has cast a long shadow over the literary world for the last 400 years. From his genre defining characters to his linguistic versatility, from the sonnets which launched a thousand Valentine's cards to lines which resonate to this day with their power, humour and humanity: Shakespeare's impact on culture is reminiscent of the Colossus at Rhodes in which he himself saw the power and the dominance of Julius Caesar over the world of men. Whether one first encountered his works in the classroom, the theatre of Olivier to the films of Luhrmann, the translations of Barańczak or the comics of Gaiman, Shakespeare pervades all aspects of culture, remaining a touchstone across genres and mediums.

This volume is a humble recognition and exploration of that legacy, itself the fruit of a nation-wide conference with plenary speakers of an international acclaim. The conference was held at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow in 2016 to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bard's death. It brought together experts in the field to uncover just some of the traces he has left behind and in a broad swathe of cultural fields. The contributions that have resulted in this volume are just as wide ranging.

The contributions are divided into two main areas. The first half of the volume tackles the cultural legacy of Shakespeare, ranging from the historical and cultural context to philosophy and the practice of language teaching. The second half addresses his impact on the literary world, from the legacy of his own *Rape of Lucrece* to subjects as diverse as C.S. Lewis, Thomas Hardy and Chaucer. Much like the subject of enquiry himself, the work as a whole forms a complex, interwoven web, although our intention is certainly not to deceive.

Gerard Kilroy, in his paper entitled *Shakespeare and the Archaeology of Culture*, peels away the numerous semantic and cultural layers in

Shakespeare's vocabulary, revealing the oft unforeseen importance of understanding the complex religious context in which the Bard wrote. Kilroy elegantly demonstrates how an understanding of the Catholic faith and religious context of the time is at the heart of any understanding of both the work and the man himself.

*Shakespeare's Poland in Hamlet*, by Teresa Bałuk-Ulewiczowa, meticulously examines the historical background of the "Polish question." Far from being a throwaway reference to a faraway land like Cathay, Bałuk-Ulewiczowa provides convincing evidence that this was a conscious, informed choice on the part of Shakespeare. She also explores the rationale behind the change from the Corambis of the First Quarto to the Polonius we know and love.

The contribution of Carl Humphries, *Wittgenstein on Shakespeare: A Clash of Cultures or Something More? (A Schmalenbachian Interpretation)* delves into the controversy surrounding Wittgenstein's famous "rejection" of Shakespeare. Having presented the case, Humphries finds the position of Herman Schmalenbach to be an intriguing explanation for Wittgenstein's seemingly baffling dismissal of the Bard.

Aeddan Shaw's paper, *Utilizing Shakespeare as a Resource in Supplying Constructive Feedback in Teacher Development Programmes*, shows one example of how the far-reaching and pervasive influence of Shakespeare can be utilised in a practical manner. He demonstrates how selected metaphors, images and quotations from the work of Shakespeare may be deployed to reduce tension arising from the power imbalance between observer and trainee in the process of teacher training.

The second half of the book opens with a contribution from Dominika Ruzkiewicz, *Leaving the Final Trace: The Testamentary Poetics in the "Troilus and Cressida" Story: Chaucer, Henryson, Shakespeare*. The author presents an engaging analysis of the notion of testament in three different versions of the *Troilus and Cressida* story. Shakespeare's dexterity in recounting the tale stands out in the analysis, as does his Pandarus, permitted to address the audience in a manner reserved for the titular characters in Chaucer's version.

In her work, *The Intertextual Presence of "The Rape of Lucrece" in Shakespeare's Dramatic Works*, Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney seeks out echoes of Shakespeare in the work of the Bard himself. She explores the dark side of the Elizabethan period, seeking out intertextual clues and shadows of *The Rape of Lucrece* in Shakespeare's other dramatic works. In doing so, the author is able to provide insight into the

ability to represent moral ambiguity that is one of the trademarks of Shakespeare's art.

*Pastoral Repose: Shakespearean Reminiscences in "Under the Greenwood Tree" by Thomas Hardy* succinctly analyses the pastoral in the work of Hardy and Shakespeare, seeing traces and references to Arcadia in the work of both. Sylwia Wojciechowska in the first place explores the extent of Shakespearean inspiration in the Victorian "prose idyll" by Hardy. Then the author illustrates how these two authors present the pastoral, highlighting in particular the role of realism in delineating between them.

*The Tempest*, and particularly the figure of Prospero, are the subject of Anna Bugajska's chapter, *The Many Faces of Prospero in C.S. Lewis's "The Voyage of the Dawn Treader."* In a number of characters in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the author sees reflections and refractions of the magician, his island and other aspects of the play. In her insightful investigation Bugajska explores three major fields: the ideologies of power, the relation between the author and his art, and the image of divinity.

Finally, the volume closes with a contribution from Anna Pietrzykowska-Motyka, "*We dearly love the Bard, Sir*"—*The Politics of adulation or contestation in Two Shakespearean appropriations: Angela Carter's "Wise Children" (1992) and Jane Smiley's "A Thousand Acres" (1991).* Pietrzykowska-Motyka concentrates her investigation on selected works by acknowledged contemporary writers who retell the stories from Shakespeare by appropriating them and adjusting to the tastes of the modern reader. Here the author demonstrates how very different narratives can be formed and created from the same Shakespearean source, inspiring new generations to reconsider and play with his timeless plotlines.

The last word should undoubtedly go to Shakespeare himself, in lieu of the traditional invitation to the reader to enjoy the present volume. Instead, the editors would prefer to close this foreword with a quotation:

If we shadows have offended,  
Think but this, and all is mended—  
That you have but slumbered here  
While these visions did appear.  
And this weak and idle theme,

No more yielding but a dream,  
Gentles, do not reprehend.  
If you pardon, we will mend.  
And, as I am an honest Puck,  
If we have unearnèd luck  
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,  
We will make amends ere long.

*Midsummer's Nights Dream*. Act V, Scene 1.

Sylwia Wojciechowska and Aeddan Shaw

### On the text

The volume has been laid out and typeset according to the Harvard Referencing System. There are, however, some cases in which full references are given, such as with the description of manuscripts or various versions of the texts under investigation. Since the authors referred to numerous editions of Shakespeare's works, references to his plays and poems are furnished in a concise abbreviated form in the main body of the text with the full description to be found in the Bibliography. A list of abbreviations has been included to assist the reader and is to be found as a separate section before this Introduction.